Main page
Contents
Current events
Random article
About Wikipedia
Contact us
Donate

Contribute
Help
Community portal
Recent changes
Upload file

Tools
What links here
Related changes
Special pages
Permanent link
Page information
Cite this page
Wikidata item

Print/export
Download as PDF

Languages
বাংলা
Deutsch
ཇོ་ཁ
Français
Italiano
Norsk bokmål
Русский
தமிழ்
Türkçe
中文
Edit links

Bhutan Broadcasting Service

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The **Bhutan Broadcasting Service** (**BBS**, Dzongkha: འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་གཞུང་གི་ཨོ་ཌիཡོ་ཀ་ལས་ཁུངས།) is the state-owned radio and television service in Bhutan. A public service corporation, it is fully funded by the state and it is the only service to offer both radio and television to the kingdom, and is the only television service to broadcast from inside the Bhutanese border. The use of telecommunications is currently governed through the Information, Communications and Media Act of 2006.

Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS)

Type	Public corporation (since 1992) government-owned broadcaster
Industry	Broadcasting
Founded	1973 (as Radio NYAB) 1986 (radio, as BBS) 1999 (television)
Headquarters	Thimphu, Bhutan
Key people	Tshering Wangchuk, CEO
Products	TV, radio, online services
Owner	Government of Bhutan
Number of employees	335
Website	www.bbs.bt

Contents [hide]

1 History
1.1 Radio in Bhutan
1.2 Television in Bhutan
1.2.1 Channels
2 Controversy
3 See also
4 References
5 External links

History [edit]

For many years, Bhutan did not have modern telecommunications. The first radio broadcasts commenced in November 1973, when the National Youth Association of Bhutan (NYAB) began radio transmissions of news and music for a half-hour each Sunday, under the name "Radio NYAB."[1] The transmitter was first rented from a local telegraph office in Thimphu. The government took over Radio NYAB in 1979,[2] and renamed it the Bhutan Broadcasting Service in 1986,[3] with expansions in radio scheduling as well as construction of a modern broadcast facility occurring in 1991.[3]

For a long time, Bhutan was the only nation in the world to ban television.[4] The first night of television broadcasts finally occurred on June 2, 1999, on the night of the Jigme Singye Wangchuck's silver jubilee.[5]

Radio in Bhutan [edit]

Shortwave radio reached all of Bhutan in 1991. In June 2000, FM stations opened in the south and west of the country, expanding to central Bhutan in January 2001. By the end of 2005, FM radio service reached the entire country. Since November 2009, radio airs for 24 hours a day (23 hours and 21 minutes taking into account pauses and connection breaks), with the low listening times of 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. featuring repeats of the previous day's schedule. 14 hours and 45 minutes of each broadcast day is broadcast in Dzongkha, with 3 hours and 45 minutes broadcast in English, 2 hours and 53 minutes in Sharchop and an hour and 58 minutes in Nepali.

Television in Bhutan [edit]

BBS is the first television station in Bhutan. News, documentaries, and entertainment programs were originally broadcast for one hour in the evening (7 p.m. to 8 p.m.), seven days a week, but expanded to four hours (6 p.m. to 10 p.m.) in December 2004. Once limited to the capital city, television service spread to the entire Kingdom via satellite in February 2006. It operates 31 TV stations across the country.

In 2008, BBS expanded their television schedule to air from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. Most of the programming is aired in Dzongkha, but two current events and news programs each night are aired in English.

The programming from the previous night is repeated from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. the next morning. Special entertainment and music request programs are also aired between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Weekends.

Channels [edit]

- **BBS TV (BBS 1)** - BBS' flagship channel, it broadcasts news and current affairs, education, sports, and culture. It launched on June 2, 1999 as first television channel of Bhutan.
- **BBS 2** - BBS' general entertainment channel, it was launched in 2012.

Controversy [edit]

Although BBS is extremely popular among the Bhutanese people, mismanagement has plagued its growth. The government's attempts to keep its actions and content under its control include deputing senior civil servants as CEOs and toying with the annual budget string.[*citation needed*] Anchors suddenly disappear from the screen. One of the producers has sued the BBS in court.

On December 6, 2012, the Indian Intelligence Bureau red flagged the Bhutan Broadcasting Service as a hate channel among 24 others for beaming anti-India programmes. A proposal for action was sent to the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs.[6]

See also [edit]

- Media of Bhutan
- Telecommunications in Bhutan

References [edit]

1. ^ Logan, Stephen (2008). *Asian communication handbook 2008.* AMIC. p. 134.
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3. ^ a b Drost, Harry (1991). *The World's news media: a comprehensive reference guide.* Longman. p. 53.
4. ^ Bhutan to enter TV age. BBC News. April 26, 1999.
5. ^ Larsson, Tomas (2001). "The race to the top: the real story of globalization". Cato Institute: 126. ISBN 978-1930865143.
6. ^ MHA glare on hate channels: Govt puts on notice 24 foreign TV channels showing anti-India

External links [edit]

- BBS.bt – Official Website
- Information, Communications and Media Act of 2006

Categories: Mass media in Bhutan | Radio networks | Radio stations in Bhutan | Television stations in Bhutan | Television channels and stations established in 1999 | 1973 in Bhutan | Publicly funded broadcasters

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